

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

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25X1C SUBJECT Sources of Weakness in the Communist Regime

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- 25X1X 1. The Communists now holding positions in the Czechoslovak Government are, for the most part, untrained in the fields to which they have been assigned. After the February 1948 Coup, a good many men were brought into the Finance Ministry from the Communist Party; but they were not economic experts.

25X1X [redacted] (A man was discharged [redacted] when it was found that his brother had been working for the BBC, but this man was taken back again because the Communist Party could not fill his job.) Before the Coup, four out of five head men in the National Bank were not Communists, and the managing director was of the Benes Party. The Foreign Affairs Ministry took in nearly all Communists, many with no qualifying experience. So did the Foreign Trade Ministry, either dropping the qualified experts there or keeping them on in advisory positions with no authority. The Ministry of Industry is all Communist. The Ministry of Internal Trade was all Communist as early as the beginning of 1949.

2. [redacted]

3. Up to the time of the Coup, there were four parties, with half the posts held by Benes' party and its allies. This group had no economic program other than to provide a brake on communism. The other half was made up predominantly of the Communist Party, with the Social Democrats under Fierlinger representing about 5% of the over-all total. In the Finance Ministry, of one thousand employees about 30 were Communists, more than half were Benes followers, and more than one hundred were rightist Social Democrats. The first Communist Party minister in 1946 brought 20 Party members into his cabinet and, for two years, tried to get all the important jobs into Communist Party hands, but his progress was slow prior to the Coup.

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4. The spread-up of communism is due to war fear, engendering the desire to get down to the economic level of the USSR before the red Army comes into Czechoslovakia, and also to work down into the population to ferret out potential saboteurs. However, it will take two years to collectivize agriculture.
5. There have been two purges at Charles University. The first was based on political reliability, the second on economic status of parents. Only children of miners, agriculturists, and wood-cutters are sure of approval.
6. Slovakia, in the old days, was like Poland, with many poor workers and a few very rich people. This made it a politically-backward region, and the people were easily swayed and their votes were available cheap in return for promises. Political leaders found it easy to switch parties. The population is mostly Catholic, and I cannot believe that real Communists are in any considerable number there.

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